(c) Under SI. No. 364 of Notification 21/2002 dated 1.3.2002, Blood Glucose Monitoring System (Glucometer) and test strips attract 10% custom duty.

(d) According to ICMR there is epidemiological evidence showing increase in prevalence of diabetes, particularly in urban areas of the country.

(e) National Diabetes Control Programme is being implemented by ICMR. However, Diabetes is managed by all institutions, in the health care delivery system e.g. PHC/CHC/District Hospitals, Medical Colleges etc. Central Health Education Bureau (CHEB) is the apex organisation for health education in prevention of diseases in the country. Exact year-wise details of all such activities are not available.

Departments in Safdarjung Hospital without head

550. SHRIV.V. RAGHAVAN:Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many Departments of Safdarjung Hospital are presently functioning without a head;

(b) if so, the details of such Departments;

(c) the efforts made/being made to have heads for these headless Departments;

(d) whether it is also a fact that the efficiency of these headless Departments has since reduced considerably; and

(e) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA) (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) In view of (a) above do not arise.

Ban on sale of tobacco

† 551. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether the manufacturing, distribution and sale of tobacco, Gutka and Pan Masala has been banned in several States in the country;

(b) whether Government also propose to enact any similar law to ban the above said items;

(c) whether public opinion was sought in this regard through a notification date the 29th December, 2002; and

(d) the main point of the public opinion so received and the action being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) The Food (Health) Authorities of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Goa have prohibited the sale of Pan Masala containing tobacco/chewing tobacco/Gutka in their States under the provisions of PFA Act, 1954.

(b) No such proposal at present is proposed to be moved by the Central Government.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. The Ministry has not issued notification dated 29th December, 2002. However, a draft notification issued vide GSR No. 731 (E) dated 29th October, 2002 for inviting comments relates to amendment to the standards of Pan Masala without tobacco. The main point of the comments received are: (i) it is apprehended that proposed rules would prohibit the sale and production of Gutka. (ii) the labeling of Pan Masala containing arecanut and catechu "is injurious to health" should be dropped. The comments received are being examined.

Infant and Mothers Mortality Rate

552. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the increasing infant and mothers mortality rate in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details of steps taken to reduce the infants and mothers mortality rate?